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The Marriage of ISAAC,

BEING THE
SUBSTANCE
OF A
DISCOURSE

Delivered at EXETER,

In the YEAR 1744.

By JOHN CENNICK.

But I speak concerning Christ and the Church,
Eph. v. 32.

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The Marriage of ISAAC.

GEN. xxiv. 31.

Come in, thou blessed of the Lord, wherefore standest thou without ?

WHEN Abraham was grown old, and desired to see his son Isaac married before his departure out of the world, and feared lest he should take a wife of the daughters of the Canaanites, he called his steward Eliezer, and sent him to the city of Nahor, in Mesopotamia, to seek there a wife for his son ; and when the steward was come into that country, and found Rebekah by a well, without the gates of the city, and hoped God had sent her as an answer to his prayers. He enquired her name, and asked if there was room in her father's house, that he might lodge there ? And Rebekah made haste to let her mother and brother Laban know that there was a stranger, with some young men and camels, waiting at the well, and who desired to lodge with them. I suppose she related to them what had passed, how she had seen him at first, when she went out for water, praying by the well, and calling upon the God of Abraham, and how kindly he had behaved to her, and given her a present of a costly frontlet or jewel, after she had watered his breasts, and how she observed him bowing down and wor-

shipping the Lord God of his master, when she had told him whose daughter she was, and given him hopes that he might lodge in their house; from all which Laban could easily think he was not of the heathen, but of those who knew the Lord, and therefore glad to find one of that number (for such have always been few and rare in the world) he ran out to meet the good man, and began to salute and accost him in the words of my text, "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord! wherefore standest thou without? for I have prepared the house and room for the camels."

Throughout the whole account of this extraordinary transaction, and manner of bringing about the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah, there are some things to be observed to our comfort and instruction, who live in this time of the New Testament grace, in these days of the Son of man.

I believe we should not be content to read the scriptures of patriarchal times merely as a true history. The Holy Ghost, doubtless, intended that all should preach Jesus Christ to us, though at that time but darkly, till the veil was taken away: But, according to St. Paul, all were shadows of him that was to come, namely, Jesus Christ our Saviour, the Husband and Spouse of our souls.

I will make observations on some passages, which in this history are handed down to us, and shew what a resemblance it has to the spiritual marriage of the Lamb and his church, with all the many circumstances that attend it.

I do not doubt but Abraham could have found women enough in the land of Canaan, where he dwelt, and wherein he was now rich, and a sort of prince among the people, equally as fair, and
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far more wealthy than in that land to which he sent his servant to get his son a wife; but he loved that country: And though it was far off, and, perhaps, the inhabitants poor, yet he chose thence to fetch a bride for Isaac, and made his servant promise, and even swear to him, not to let his son marry one of the daughters of the land wherein he lived.

The servant was willing to do all his master would have him promise, but had one scruple, and that was, in case none of the country of Mesopotamia should be willing to leave their own land, or be persuaded to accept of the offer which he should make, and, on this account, could not vow absolutely to obey him: therefore good old Abraham satisfied him, and assured him, in this case, he should be free from his oath.

The steward immediately promises to do all that lay in his power; and as all the goods of his master were in his hands, he took several young men with him, and ten camels, and went out in quest of the native country of his master.

The scripture observes, that when he came to the city or town of Nahor, he did not rashly enter into it, (so much he had learned of Abraham, who once in faith went out, not knowing whither he went, till God brought him into that good land) but depending upon the Lord God of his master, he stopped by a well, without the town, and rested his camels, and prayed to be directed in choosing the right person, the woman that the Lord would have for Isaac's wife; nay, he went so far as to pray, that when the maids of the place should come out for water, and he should ask one for leave to drink at her pitcher, the Lord should make that a sign to him, that if she

she was the right person, she should give him willingly, and offer his camels water also. He had not ended his prayer before Rebekah came in sight with her pitcher upon her shoulder; and when she had filled it at the well, he asked her for leave to drink, and she readily consented, and said, "Drink, and I will draw water for thy camels also."

The simplicity and piety of the steward, as well as the condescension of the Most High, is here to be admired. What do reasoning and unbelieving men lose for want of that child-like and honest heart, which once shone so clearly in ancient days? We read these accounts with pleasure, and observe how simply the creature prays, and how graciously the Creator answers. O that we would always tread the steps of the former, and we should find the latter is the same. The Lord that changes not is his name. If in our minutest and less material matters, we implored his help, we should find him our God and guide to death, and he would direct and answer us in all things to our eternal comfort.

While Rebekah was watering the camels, and fulfilling the sign the steward had asked of God; it is said, "The man, wondering at her, held his peace, to see if the Lord had prospered his journey or not." One should have thought he needed not to have doubted, but made his offers, and told his errand directly: Yet though he was not too eager, but waited upon the Lord to see what he would do, he took a golden ear-ring, or rather a jewel for the forehead, of great value, and two bracelets, and gave them to her, and asked, "Who she was? and if he and his men could lodge at her Father's house?" All this, as I observed before, she related

to her parents and to her brother, who therefore met and invited him home to his house in that manner, "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord," &c. And when they had unloaded the camels and foddered them, and washed the steward's feet, and the feet of his young men, they invited them to eat, but (see an instance of the steward's great faithfulness) he would not eat until he had told his errand. And he began and said, I am Abraham's servant; and, from first to last, related all what he had sworn to his master, and how he was come to get a wife for Isaac; how he had prayed by the well for direction in his choice of a fit person, and how it had gone with Rebekah, as an answer to his prayer: And now, added he, "Deal honestly with me, and say if you will let your daughter go with me; and if not, then will I search farther to the right hand or to the left?" and both Bethuel, her father, and Laban, her brother, answered, It is of the Lord: Rebekah is before thee, take her to be thy master's son's wife, as the Lord hath spoken." When the steward heard this, he was so thankful that he had succeeded, that he bowed down to the earth, and worshipped the Lord. And now he opened his treasures, and gave her jewels of silver and jewels of gold, and fine raiment: He gave also to her mother and brother precious things, and they eat and drink, and tarried all night. In the morning, when the parents of Rebekah would have detained the steward, who was for hastening back to Canaan, and he pressed hard to have leave to depart, they asked their daughter, "Wilt thou go with this man?" As if they had said, thou seest upon what conditions thou goest; thou hast a long journey before thee: thou must leave thy own relations and native country; thou
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art to go with this stranger into a foreign land ; what wilt thou do ? wilt thou go ? and she answered, I will go. And now the servant's heart must leap for joy, and be fully convinced how God had prospered his journey. And they sent away Rebekah with her nurse Deborah, and some damsels her companions ; and they blessed Rebekah in a tender manner, and she took leave, and came with the steward and the servants into the south country. And Isaac was out in the fields, about evening, praying. I suppose he was intreating the Lord to prosper his father's servant, and to preserve his bride on the journey, and let no evil befall them. And while he was speaking, he saw the camels coming, and Rebekah saw him at a distance, and asked the steward, " Who is it that comes to meet us ? " and the steward told her, " It is my master Isaac. " And she was ashamed, and alighted, and put a veil upon herself and bowed down before him. And the steward told Isaac all that had passed ; and Isaac took Rebekah and brought her into his mother's house, and she became his wife.

This is the substance of the sacred history, which I have repeated, the better to bring to your minds the circumstances of this marriage. And now I will speak of the real and eternal mystery of the marriage of the Lamb, from this of Isaac and Rebekah ; which however blessed and extraordinary, is yet, like all other pure marriages, but a figure of the true.

None must be offended, that I speak in such terms of the kingdom of God and our eternal salvation, or because I compare it to a wedding, &c. for our Saviour has himself made the comparison thus in many places of the New Testament.

ment. He says, "The kingdom of God is like virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the Bridegroom," Matt. xv. Again, "The kingdom of God is like a marriage which a king made for his son; and he sent out his servants at supper-time to invite those that were bidden to the supper," &c. Matt. xxii. &c.

The matter is true and certain: The King is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus, the King of kings, and Lord of lords. The Son is the only begotten of God, who is himself God the Creator, and Heir of all things, the Maker and Lord of all. This Son, begotten before all worlds, will celebrate an everlasting marriage with his creatures, and sends out his ministers, his stewards of the mysteries of his kingdom, and servants to invite and bring in souls to the wedding: And, properly, this is the sole business of every true preacher of the gospel. The office Abraham's servant had is theirs also, only he was to get a wife for an earthly prince, but we for an heavenly, even the Prince of the kings of the earth. "Blessed are all they that are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb," Rev. xix. 9.

As Abraham might have took a wife for his son of the daughters of the land where he lived, perhaps more fair and rich than any in Mesopotamia, but would not, and chose rather out of love to that far country, to fetch his daughter the wife of his son: So God, who, from all eternity, had designed the Lamb's marriage, might have chosen for him a wife among the inhabitants of heaven. There were many of the blessed angels who had kept their first estate, and were fairer and better than any of the children of men: Of these he might have thought good to elect the bride of

Christ, or created him souls after his own heart, in perfect holiness and innocency, who could have been his spouse for ever: But here first appeared the tender mercy of God Almighty: He loved this world, and will have his ministers from hence call a people who shall be his son's wife. He will send into this far country (and farther from him, in this our fallen estate, we cannot be, unless we were quite in hell) and invite souls to his supper: "Come in, he says, all things are ready, come to the marriage." This, then, is the office of a minister to bring this glad news to a lost world; and should they not be able to persuade men, should they fail; or should the souls to whom the gracious offers of divine love are made, refuse, they (the ministers) shall be clear, like the steward of Abraham: but it would be better if the refusers had not been born. If the ministers, the watchmen, warn the people, and they will not hear, then shall the watchmen be free, and their blood shall be upon their own heads; this God had told the prophet Ezekiel long ago. But why do I speak thus? I hope better things of you, my brethren, and things that accompany salvation. I hope you rejoice at the good news of the redemption, and are ready to follow the Lamb. O that not one of you may be wanting when the trumpet shall proclaim the marriage of the Lamb is come. May you and I, in that day, be like virgins betrothed to him; virgins as himself expresses it, "with our lamps burning, and having on the wedding-garment, that when he shall open, we may enter into the wedding chamber, and go no more out."

○ A servant of Jesus Christ, a minister of the gospel, should learn somewhat of the servant of Abraham.

Abraham. For, first, see how ready he was, at his master's word, to go out, nor appears unwilling to undertake the journey, or undergo any trouble or pains, so he might but please his lord; and, even when he came to the place, from whence he should take a wife for his master's son, he first looks up to the God of his master, on whose blessing he alone depended; and yet farther, when all things seemed to succeed, and he was come into the house, and welcomed in so civil and joyful a manner, and a feast was prepared, his heart was too faithful to forget his great business; he could not, he would not eat till he had told his errand, and made it sure that Rebekah should go with him. O that thus every minister would behave! Their work is of much greater weight and consequence than this of the steward, and their office more divine and sacred. What servant or witness of our Saviour then, who knows what it has cost their Lord and Master to ransom souls, can think much of leaving all that he has, undertaking journies, passing through many troubles, fatigues, difficulties, evil and good reports, and even spending his days in pain and labour, and wearing out himself in the business, if, after all, he can but be the happy means of bringing some to the marriage? Let them know then who their Master is, nor rashly run forward without their errand, or be wearied in his work. Let them follow Abraham's steward in this respect, and make their prayer to the Lord, to direct and prosper, and bless them in their office, for else they may preach till his second coming, and not win one soul to his kingdom. Just so it happened once to some of his disciples, who were fishers, and whom he intended to make

fishers of men, without him they had toiled and rowed the whole night, and caught nothing; but when he came to them, and they had let down the net at his word, they inclosed such a number of fishes, that their net brake, and all their boats were filled with fish. This miracle of our Saviour's taught them afterwards in their better fishery, "that without him they could do nothing." But as surely as a servant of the Lord goes out in his name, and with his blessing, he shall find his Master's presence with him to the end of the world: And when he invites the souls to come to the marriage, he shall make them a willing people, and their hearts shall answer to the minister's joy, "I will go." A minister must learn something more, namely, that part of his office which intitles him to the name of a watchman: As Abraham's servant waited by the well, and as a fisherman waits for the shoals of fish, and is contented to be out in all storms, rains, heats, colds, and inclement weather, only that he may succeed and prosper, so should a minister of the Lord Christ watch for souls, and remember, to his last hour, he must not be a lord over them, nor master, nor head, but he is a servant, and, and like his High-Priest, must be among them as one that serves. He should be ready in season and out of season, and endure hardships as a good soldier, waiting for the blessed time of bringing many to the Saviour, and filling his house with guests. Such faithful men may be despised in their day, and esteemed mean and foolish, and persecutions may thwart and hinder them for a while, but let them follow the Captain of their salvation: let them take up his cross and reproach, and go out of the camp after him; and esteem what ever they can suffer

suffer for his sake, an honour, so they may but finish their course with joy, and hear the Lord say to them, in that day, "Well done." This shall amply reward them for all.

But to return; as soon as the steward had received an answer to his prayer, and Rebekah had done watering her camels, he gave her a jewel for the forehead, and bracelets for her hands, of fine gold; just so when our Saviour takes hold of the heart, and a sinner comes to him, he also bestows the antitype of this jewel. He gives the "Mark of the Lamb in the forehead," the seal of his Holy Spirit, which no man knows but him that receives it. He puts his mark upon the sheep that he had lost, and says, thou art mine; their hands lay hold on eternal life, and a joy springs up in the heart which shall have no end. Scarce had Rebekah received this present, but she ran to acquaint her brother and her father's house of her good luck, and this was one chief reason of Laban's meeting the steward afterwards with that pretty salutation. He saw the bracelets on his sister's arms, and the jewel upon her forehead, and received him into the house joyfully, with, "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord!" It is common for a new-born soul, when he has found mercy, and knows his sins are forgiven, and that our Saviour has marked and sealed him to the day of redemption, that he goes and tells his friends and dear relations what the Lord has done for him, and how God has had compassion on him. "Come hither, can he say, like David, all you that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul." Would to God all that hear me to-day, knew what this frontlet meant, this mark of the Lamb in their forehead, and could go
hence.

hence to all their pious acquaintance, and relate to them, I have found the Lord; I have got redemption in his blood; I am his, and he is mine; he has written upon me his new name.

6 The hospitality and kindness wherewith the whole family of Bethuel received the steward, is not to be passed over in silence: It should teach us to be glad to receive into our houses the children of God, and such as bear his name, or confess him; for thus some have entertained angels unawares; and thus this act of civility became afterwards a blessing and happiness to the whole family. But I must once more commend the faithfulness of the steward: he would not eat till he had delivered his message; he did not want their food and raiment, their silver or gold, he wanted to have them become rich and happy through their kindred to Abraham. He wanted to make their daughter a princess, and an honour in the land, and thus far he succeeded. And now, my dear brethren and sisters, I must let you know, also, my errand to you to-day. I am the Lord the God of Abraham's servant; my Master is over all in heaven and earth; ten thousand times ten thousand worship before him, and all lay their crowns down at his feet. He is Lord of all; but he has a Son whom he has appointed Heir of all things, and by whom all worlds were made, who is the Maker, Redeemer, and Preserver of men, and who is now about to celebrate his everlasting marriage in the kingdom of God. I come now to get a wife for my Master among you. O think as if I asked one by one, Wilt thou go? Jesus Christ, my Master, the eternal Son of God, chooses poor sinners to be his bride; he delights to dwell with the children

children of men. He loves us with everlasting love; and therefore left all his holy angels, his ministring spirits, the thrones and principalities, and comes down from heaven to earth to call you to his marriage. This is no similitude, no parable, no likeness or figure, but this is a real and solid truth, you may be the bride, the Lamb's wife. You, poor people, who have long lived without him in the world, and have been careless and at ease in Sion: Ye unhappy souls, who have lived a profane and wicked life; ye distressed and forsaken wretches, who are weary and heavy laden, come ye to the marriage: All things are ready, come, and he will in no wise cast you out. Ho! ye sensualists, ye lovers of the world and pleasure; ye who have spent whole days and nights in your lusts, and have loved the tabret and music in your feasts: Ye drunkards, whoremongers, adulterers, and unclean, there is yet room; ye may come to the marriage. Ye who sit and sigh for mercy, ye who are pained at the heart, and would give the world to be saved, whose souls are awakened and concerned about the redemption, in the name of Jesus, the Son of God, I invite you to the marriage. In the name of Jesus I offer you, Will you be his bride? Will you go to him? Why then, lo, all things are ready; God the Father is ready to meet thee, to fall upon thy neck and kiss and pardon thee. God the Son, thy Maker, is ready to be thy husband; his righteousness shall be thy wedding-garment, and his white robe shall dress thee. God the Holy Ghost is ready to seal thee to the day of redemption, to bear witness in thy heart, thou art a child of God. The blood of Jesus is ready to wash thee: the wounds
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of Jesus are ready to heal thee; the grave of Jesus is ready to bury and hide all thy sins; the napkin he left behind is ready to wipe the tears from thy eyes; the angels are ready to rejoice over thee; a place is ready for thee in heaven; all things are ready; only let thy heart be ready, only be thou able to sing like David, "O God, my heart is ready;" and then nothing is wanting; "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord, wherefore standest thou without?" come in and be saved eternally.

Nothing seemed so to offend and grieve he King in the parable, as that some made their excuses; one had too much business on his hands, another had his farm and oxen to mind, and another loved his wife more than him, and prayed to be excused: such are the trifling excuses all men make in our days. One supposes none has such cares and vexatious people round about him as he. Another thinks it is very well for people who, having nothing else to do, to follow Jesus, and be devoted wholly to him; but for him, he thinks, I am in trade, I must mind my business and be diligent; I must conform to the world, and have no spare time, I hope God will not require it of me. Alas! poor man, what does he require? he only would have thee saved for ever. He only would make thee happy in the bride chamber to eternity. Take care, lest it be said once to thee, "Thou hast loved house and land, &c. better than me," and thou be indeed excused from coming to his supper: But the most foolish and inexcusable of all, are they who think I am married, and therefore I cannot come. These are of two sorts, such as love husband and wife, or children, more than our Saviour, and such as being cumbered with

with concern for their maintenance, hope to be excused thereby before God. The former should resolve like St. Austin, and every true believer, rather to leave father, and mother, and husband, and wife, and children, than not be Christ's disciple: The latter, while he takes care for the body and bread that perisheth, should have a double concern for the bread that endureth to eternal life. His chief aim should be to come himself to our Saviour, and bring his children and wife with him, that so, when he should give an account of things done in the body, before the judgment-seat, he might say with joy, as our Saviour did, in another sense, "Here are the children thou hast given me, and I have lost none." How happy are those parents who can answer thus!

But how ill our Saviour takes it, of all such as go about to frame excuses in this weighty matter? and how dangerous it is, may be seen in the gospel, where the King is said to be angry with them, and said, "not one of them shall taste of my supper." O then awake, ye souls, who have thought on making an excuse, and hear the alarm; rite up and follow him; and be determined, at all hazards, at the loss of all things, to have the Lord for your Husband, and come follow the Lamb to the supper.

How many excuses might Rebekah have framed, if she had been unwilling to go to Isaac? She might have thought, Isaac is a prince in the land, and I am unfit to be his wife: I have been brought up in a plain servant-like manner; I have lived as an hand-maid in my father's house, and have nothing wherein to appear before Isaac, becoming his bride; therefore had Isaac sent her fine raiment to make her fit; and jewels of sil-

ver and jewels of gold, to adorn her as a bride for the bridegroom. Just so you complain: Ah! I am unfit to be our Saviour's bride; I have been a servant to the world and the devil; my best righteousness is sin and filthy rags; how then should I venture to appear before him, who am vile dust and ashes! How shall I bow myself before him whose eyes can see no iniquity? Why, therefore, has thy dear Redeemer, thy heavenly Isaac, prepared his blood to wash thee and make thee clean, and without spot or wrinkle before him? His righteousness shall be a robe to thee, and his salvation thy fine linen, thy wedding-garment: This is the righteousness of the saints; in this thou shalt be fair, altogether fair, and no spot in thee. In this raiment, all glorious within, shalt thou be brought to the King, and he shall have pleasure in thy beauty. His merits shall be to thee better than jewels of silver and jewels of gold; and thou shalt be perfect through the comeliness which he shall put upon thee. Do not be afraid, only believe, and draw near and come.

But Rebekah could have made another objection: She could have thought, the way is long, I shall not be able to walk to Canaan; I shall neither find my way, nor have strength to travel so far: Therefore had Isaac sent her a guide to shew her the way, and camels to carry her. You may also think, O, I do not know the way to heaven; and did I know how to get thither, I am afraid I should never have strength to hold out; I should sit down weary on this side Jordan, and never reach the new Jerusalem, the land of Canaan: Therefore, Jesu's everlasting arms, his shoulders, and bosom, and his dear wounds, shall be thy chariot. This is that spoken of in Solomon's song,

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“ It is paved with love, and lined with purple, fit for the daughters of Jerusalem.” He travelled and was weary, that thou mightest hold out to the end, and be saved. He was fatigued and faint, that thou mightest run and not be weary, and walk and not faint. He will carry the lambs in his bosom, and bear thee upon his shoulders, till thou art at home. His holy scriptures, and his Spirit shall guide thee. He shall lead you into all truth, “ The Lord himself will be thy God and guide unto death.”

Rebekah could yet have reasoned, I am now adorned with jewels and fine raiment, but, perhaps, on my journey, robbers may assault me, and take all away; or wild beasts fall upon me in the wilderness, and tear me to pieces; therefore had Isaac sent her a company of young men to guard her, and keep off every enemy. When you reflect, I am afraid satan will rob me of all again, or come upon me like a roaring lion, and devour me, then know, Jesus has commanded his angels to encamp round about thee. As when Jacob went out, God’s host went out with him, so it shall be with thee; the angels shall wait upon thee, and keep off every danger, till they have landed thee above, with songs of everlasting joy. The Archangel, the Angel of the covenant, Christ Jesus, goes before thee. He shall not leave thee, nor forsake thee in this howling wilderness. He will bear thee up; be of good comfort; only come, and all shall be well.

But Rebekah could still have objected, I am now to pass through a country strange and barren, and may die with want by the way; therefore had Isaac sent camels laden with provision of the best things of the land of Canaan. And when thou ob-

jest, I am here in a dry land where no water is, in a desert country, where is a famine to the soul, then know, Jesus has provided for it. He who led Israel through the wilderness, and rained upon them manna, and clave the hard rock, and gave them water as out of the springing well, has, in like manner, prepared for thee a table in the wilderness of this world. His flesh shall be thy daily, thy super-substantial bread, and his blood shall be thy drink indeed. This shall be to thee like the widow's cruse of oil and her meal, it shall never fail. Thou shalt eat and live for ever, and drink of this brook by the way, and lift up thy head. This is the true bread which came down from heaven, and gives life to the world. He has prepared for thee the fruit of the tree of life, and wine that rejoiceth the heart of God and man.

But still if Rebekah had been loath to leave any thing, she might have said, how shall I part with my own pleasant country, or leave my companions, the damsels, and my nurse, whom I have loved? How shall I bid farewell to my mother and my brother, and go away? Why, therefore had Isaac sent her jewels and provisions, better and more desirable than what her own country yielded; and by all the tokens of favour and grace, he made her assured he would be better to her than father and mother, or brethren and sisters; and for her companions she had no need to leave them; he had sent her many camels, that she might bring with her many others of her companions, and thereby signified there was room for all. So canst thou think about leaving the world, thy friends, thy companions, and pleasures, &c. But O look up and see what a country thou

thou art going to possess ; one taste of the powers of the world to come, one glimpse of the city of the first-born shall make thee for ever remember thou art here a stranger, and thy home and thy house is in a better world ; nor grieve too much if thy father should disown thee, or she that bare thee should hate thee ; should thy brethren or thy sisters despise thee, take it not hard, do not be discouraged, for when thy father or mother forsake thee, the Lord shall take thee up. He will be better than ten fathers ; thou shalt have in him a hundred fold in this world, and in the world to come, eternal life. And thy pleasures they are only for a season, but the pleasures at God's right hand are for evermore. If thou hast companions or friends, that thou lovest, or such as are dear to thee, thou hast no need to leave them ; but Jesus himself tells thee, " There is room," bring them along with thee, and Jesus will receive them all, with a " Come in, ye blessed of the Lord " If they have been companions in sin, if ye have walked with them in the paths of death, O then invite them to come with you to the kingdom of God. The same wounds that made you an open door into the marriage, shall receive them in too ; the same mouth that calls you, calls them also. The same arms stretched out to embrace you, are open to embrace them. It is a glorious, a sufficient and infinite salvation ; there is room enough for all the world, and all things are ready, therefore I pray you come to the marriage : " Come in, ye blessed of the Lord," ye dear souls, who hunger and thirst after redemption and righteousness ; and whoever waits like a beggar at the door, poor in spirit, and vile and unworthy in your own eyes, " Come in, wherefore do you stand without ?"

without?" there is room for you; come in and be saved.

Let me reason with you, as Abraham's servant did with Rebekah's relations: He said, "Tell me if your daughter shall go; or if not, let me go in search farther to the right hand or to the left?" So I say to you: Tell me, what answer shall I carry back to the Lord my Master? Shall I return weeping, and bring him the heavy tidings, Lord, they will not come? "They all began with one accord to make excuse;" they made light of it. It was nothing to them that the King of heaven and earth offers them marriage, that they are redeemed by his own blood; and that he comes himself, and has sent his prophets, rising early, and his apostles and ministers, now in the end of the world, to pray them to be reconciled. What say ye? Shall I go farther in quest of souls, because ye have no mind to be saved, or have so many objections? O no! methinks I hear you say, "I will go." Ask your hearts, Are you willing to be the spouse and sister of Jesus, the King's daughter? Do your hearts burn within you to follow him? Do you want to have him kiss you with the kisses of his love, and to put the ring upon your finger, and let that day come, when you no more shall call him "my Lord only, but my Husband?" Hosea ii. 16. Then know, assuredly, ye shall soon hear the singing and music in the heavenly house, and have the happiness of being brought to the King. Here ye shall know and feel his love, but there ye shall see him, and go out no more for ever. O Lord, let that day come quickly!

When Rebekah drew near to Abraham's house, and she saw Isaac coming out to meet her, she asked,

asked, "Who it was?" and the steward said, "It is my Master; and immediately she alighted from her camel, and took a veil and covered herself, and bowed down to the ground before him; and he took her and brought her to his mother's house, and she became his wife; and now all her journies and dangers were over; now the joy of being with her husband had swallowed up all fears and troubles for ever; and all that her husband has is her's; also, she is joint heir with him. So, by and by, shall it be with you, ye blessed souls, who now are resolved to be his in body and soul: Very soon your journies, and pains, and tears shall come to an eternal end; and when your strength fails you, and you are ready to expire, like Stephen, you shall lift up your eyes and see Jesus coming out to meet you: He that has prayed for thee, thou poor sinner, and made intercession with strong cries and tears, and in a bloody and shameful death ransomed thee, shall come out to welcome thee in. O what wilt thou think when thou seest him, and when it shall be told thee, That is thy Master; that is the face which was once marred more than any man's; that is the Lamb who took away thy sin; those are the arms that were once bound to the cross, which now are stretched out to embrace and care's thee; that is the King's Son, who hath betrothed thee to himself, in his loving kindness, and mercy, and righteousness? I say, what wilt thou think, or what wilt thou do? I know thou wilt alight and cover thy face for joy and shame, and fall down before him, while he shall say to thee, "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord!" Come and enter thy Master's joy; I have prepared room for thee in my Father's house, and for the virgins that are thy fellows. O what shall we feel when we first

first see the Lamb of God face to face! How ashamed shall we be at our unworthiness to be his bride! How glad that he is so loving and merciful! All the comforts which we have inwardly possessed in believing on him, all the secret raptures and inconceivable sweets in his presence, here in this world, shall be nothing, in comparison of what we shall then feel, when we see him, when he shall speak to us and we to him. We shall then confess, with the queen of Sheba, when she saw the glory of Solomon, "The one half of it was not told me in my own country!" O let none here make light of it; come to this marriage to which God himself invites you; and join with me to beseech our Saviour, the Bridegroom and Head of all our souls, that we soon together may sit down at this marriage-supper, and be for ever and ever with him. Grant this, O Jesus Christ, thou Son of God, for thy precious blood and death's sake. Amen.

F I N I S.

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